

**Comments by Michigan Pork Producers Association on  
Proposed MAEAP Legislation  
S.B. 501, S.B. 502, S.B. 503, S.B. 504**

**Submitted By**

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S.B. 501, S.B. 502, S.B. 503, S.B. 504**

**Michigan Pork Producers Association (MPPA) administers programs in promotion, marketing, research and education that are financed by Michigan's 2,200 pork producers and, as a state affiliate of the National Pork Producers Council, plays a major role in addressing legislative, regulatory and trade issues affecting the pork industry.**

**MPPA members represent all sizes and types of operations from youngsters with 4-H and FFA project animals to Michigan's largest family-owned pork facilities and virtually every size of production system in between. The Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) is important to all of them.**

**Pork producers, through their industry organizations, have worked very hard to achieve a well deserved reputation for developing proactive environmental improvement programs. In fact, the pork industry was the first to develop environmental strategy programs that promoted innovative management practices. This has been coupled with an ongoing commitment from producers to fund millions of dollars of science-based environmental research and to voluntarily assess their operations for environmental challenges. Many Michigan pork producers had their operations assessed through the pork industry's environmental assurance program before MAEAP was developed. In fact, many elements of the MAEAP program were developed from the pork industry model. MPPA was an initial contributor to the development of MAEAP and continues to support the effort as an active partner.**

**MPPA and the National Pork Producers Council (NPPC), of which MPPA is a state affiliate, have assumed active roles in advocating at both the state and federal levels for environmental initiatives that are achievable, sustainable, affordable and scientifically based. Certainly, the MAEAP program meets these objectives. MPPA believes the MAEAP program offers an innovative method for maximizing environmental protection and continues to encourage all pork producers to become verified under the MAEAP Livestock System. In**

**fact, MPPA is proud to note that over 40 percent of the MAEAP verified livestock farms are pork production operations.**

**Pork producers remain committed to doing everything they can to produce in a manner that minimizes environmental impact and they realize that the MAEAP program is designed to help them achieve this objective.**

**However, despite producers' support of MAEAP and their best efforts to produce in an environmentally sustainable manner, they have become increasingly frustrated by environmental regulation that is a constantly moving target. House Bills 501 through 504 will provide producers the regulatory stability needed to protect their operations, allow them to remain viable and, as a result, provides much-needed jobs for Michigan residents. Agriculture is the second largest industry in Michigan with an economic impact exceeding \$60 billion. Pork production is a significant contributor to Michigan's agricultural economy with the market value of hogs sold approximating \$250 million annually. Economic studies indicate in excess of \$300 million of personal income and \$350 million of gross state product are also supported by the pork industry. To allow Michigan producers to compete both domestically and globally in this economically important and rapidly changing industry, it is imperative that environmental regulations be developed that provide a measure of stability. Not doing so will make Michigan producers uncompetitive with those in surrounding states, particularly in states such as Indiana that have embraced expansion of their livestock industries and have attempted to provide their producers with some constancy in environmental regulation. Notably, the Indiana Department of Agriculture has set a goal of doubling pork production in Indiana in the next twenty years and is making every effort to provide a business climate that will allow this to happen.**

**The urgency of passage of the MAEAP legislation is made greater as a result of the Department of Environmental Quality's announced intention to require permitting of many of Michigan's family-owned pork production operations by July 1, 2007. This is being done even though federal law does not require agricultural operations that have not had a discharge to apply for a permit. MPPA believes that imposing the burden of permitting on Michigan's family-owned operations is**

**unwarranted and will make this state's pork producers less competitive with those in surrounding states.**

**MPPA strongly supports passage of House Bills 501 through 504. MPPA believes these bills provide the best opportunity for enhancing environmental protection, maintaining the economic viability of this state's second largest industry and growing jobs in Michigan. MPPA asks for your favorable consideration of this important legislation.**